

Will the Celtics close out the Lakers in Los Angeles?

Tell us what you think at projosports.com/celtics



A LOOK AT SOME OF THE SPRING CHAMPS: View the gallery at HSGameTime.com/rhodeisland

Live from L.A.

Pregame and postgame blog reports from Kevin McNamara at the Staples Center, at projosports.com/celtics

Terry takes the fifth

With the Red Sox win over the Mariners Sunday, manager Terry Francona passed Jimmy Williams to become the fifth winningest manager in Red Sox history:

MANAGERS	GAMES	WINS
Joe Cronin	2007	1071
Mike Higgins	1119	560
Bill Carrigan	1003	489
Jimmy Collins	842	455
Terry Francona	713	414

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We're not in Boston anymore

Everything will go Lakers' way tonight



NBA FINALS 2008

RESULTS

GAME	SCORE
ONE	Celtics 98, Lakers 88
TWO	Celtics 108, Lakers 102

SCHEDULE

GAME	DATE	SITE
THREE	Tonight	at Los Angeles
FOUR	Thursday	at Los Angeles
FIVE	Sunday	at Los Angeles
xSIX	June 17	at Boston
xSEVEN	June 19	at Boston

x — if necessary
All games begin at 9 p.m. Eastern.

TODAY ON PROJO.COM

- An audio report from Kevin McNamara in Los Angeles.
- Today's news as it happens.

TONIGHT ON PROJO.COM

- Pregame notes and news from McNamara.
- In-game updates.
- Play-by-play summary and box scores

POSTGAME ON PROJO.COM

- Game recap from McNamara, with locker-room reaction.
- A slideshow from the game.

ALWAYS ON PROJO.COM

- Audio blogs from Journal writers.
- Video from Journal photographer Kris Craig.
- "The Bandwagon," featuring quizzes, Q-and-A's, and everything you need to know about the Celtics.

Go to: projosports.com/celtics

OK, here's a preview of tonight's game. Hey, anyone can tell you what happened after it happened, right?

BILL REYNOLDS The trick is to tell you what is going to happen before it happens, right?

So here it goes. Call this a sneak preview. Kobe will spend the night at the free-throw line, the Lakers will shoot more foul shots than the Celtics, a lot of celebrities will get a lot of face time, Jack Nicholson will be on your TV screen more than Doc Rivers, and if you didn't know any better you'd think basketball was invented in some spa in Malibu, not in some funky old gym in Springfield, Mass.

L.A., where as the old song says, palm trees grow and rents are low and the feeling is laid back.

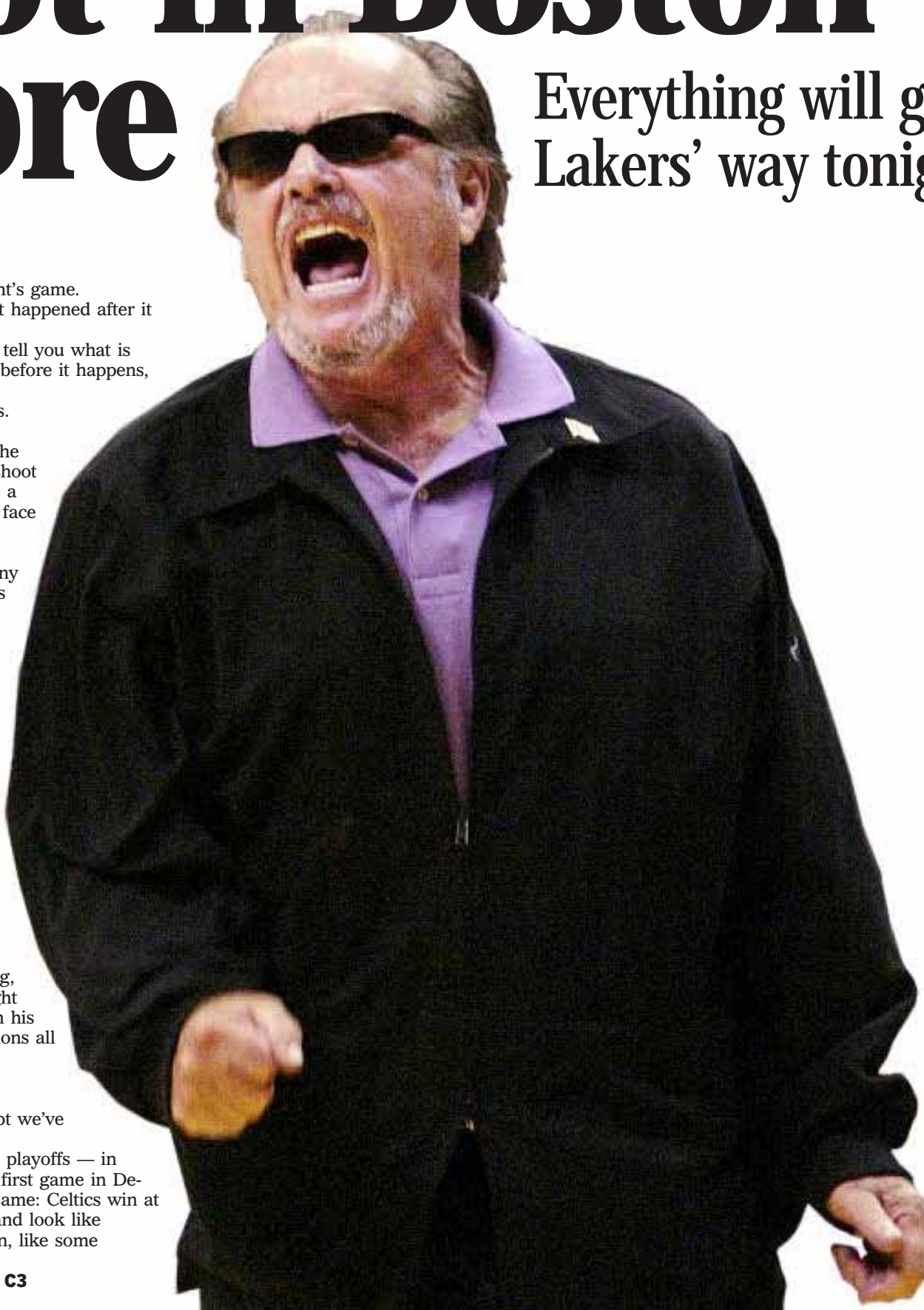
L.A., where you get beneath the surface and all there is is more surface.

And on the other side, Rivers will spend a lot of time on the sideline with a look of disbelief on his face, as if the basketball gods are cursing him. Ditto for Paul Pierce, the prodigal son returning to his old hometown to play against the Lakers team he grew up idolizing, who no doubt will spend the night all but howling at the moon with his displeasure at the refs, his emotions all over his face.

You can almost count on it. Why do I think this?

Because this is like some script we've seen too many times.

We've already seen it in these playoffs — in Atlanta, in Cleveland and in the first game in Detroit. The story was always the same: Celtics win at home, then go out on the road and look like they've turned into their evil twin, like some



AP / KEVORK DJANSEZIAN

SEE REYNOLDS, C3

The Celtics' concern is to keep L.A. from turning the tables on them

The Lakers are undefeated at home in the playoffs, and the next three games of the Finals are set for the Staples Center.

BY ROBERT LEE
JOURNAL SPORTS WRITER

BOSTON — The Celtics are two victories away from winning an unprecedented 17th NBA championship.

They are two victories away from rewriting the NBA history books.

Having already recorded the best single-season turnaround in NBA history, these Celtics, after beating the Lakers, 108-102, Sunday night, are two wins away from accomplishing the goal they had at the beginning of the season — winning their first NBA title.

"We did our job, we held home court, and now we can break it back with another win in Game Three," Boston captain Paul Pierce said. "We're not settling on a 2-0 lead. We want to go out there and win two games in L.A. That's our fo-

cus, and that's what we want to go out there and try to do."

The Celtics believed that Sunday's game was a must-win contest for them. The next three games are scheduled for Los Angeles, and the Lakers are undefeated at home in this year's playoffs.

They posted one of the best home records during the regular season (30-11), and they own the best postseason mark (8-0).

"At home we play our best basketball," Los Angeles forward and former

University of Rhode Island star Lamar Odom said. "We realize that if we play the right way we can beat this team, but it's going to take 48 minutes playing the right way."

Boston center Kendrick Perkins said: "Kobe [Bryant] has been unstoppable at home, so we've got our hands full."

A 2-0 deficit is hard to overcome in a best-of-seven series, but the Lakers proved that they have a lot of fight left in them. Los Angeles slashed a 24-point deficit with 7:26 remaining in Game Two

to two with 38.4 seconds left.

But the Celtics survived. "I thought we just weren't aggressive enough to put the game away," Pierce said after the game. "I thought we wanted the time to just run out, and we were — myself, I was a little lackadaisical with the ball. It's a great win, but definitely a lesson to be learned in that last six minutes. But just down the stretch, we've got to be a little more aggressive."

SEE CELTICS, C3

GETTING HIS WORK IN

Clay Buchholz throws in the first inning last night against the Buffalo Bisons at McCoy Stadium. Buchholz went three innings, allowing six hits and two runs in Pawtucket's 10-3 loss. **Story, Page C5.**

THE PROVIDENCE JOURNAL /
GLENN OSMUNDSON



Bad habits yield to Hansen's hard work

BOSTON — It was a situation where Craig Hansen felt he needed to reach back for a little something extra.

JIM DONALDSON

"I have this quotation written down," he said, turning slightly and reaching into his locker for a small notebook. "Strength does not come from winning," he read, after flipping quickly to a familiar, well-thumbed page. "Your struggles develop your strength — when you go through hardships and decide not to surrender."

Hansen certainly has been through some hard times on the mound after it seemed at first that pitching in pro ball was going to be oh-so-easy.

A first-round pick of the Red

Sox in 2005 after he racked up a school-record 14 saves, posted a 1.68 ERA, and was named the Big East conference's Pitcher of the Year as a junior at St. John's, Hansen was in the big leagues that September, becoming the first player in Red Sox history to reach the majors the year he was drafted.

He'd pitched 15 games in the minors out of the bullpen that summer, a total of 15.2 innings, and hadn't allowed a run in any of them. After three scoreless appearances in the Eastern League playoffs for the Double-A Portland Sea Dogs, he was brought up to Boston and, in his first appearance, retired the side in order at Tampa Bay, striking out the first batter he faced, Toby Hall, and then ending the

The Reds' Ken Griffey Jr. hits his 600th home run. **Page C4**

inning with another strikeout, fanning Julio Lugo, who's now his teammate with the Red Sox.

But struggles soon followed. He finished that season with a 6.00 ERA in four games, and that number went up in 2006, when he had an ERA of 6.68 in 38 relief appearances, giving up 46 hits in 38 innings.

That disappointing showing resulted in a demotion to the minors. Hansen spent all of last season in Pawtucket, where, although he had a 3-1 record, he gave up 58 hits in 51 innings and had an ERA of 3.86 in 40

SEE DONALDSON, C5